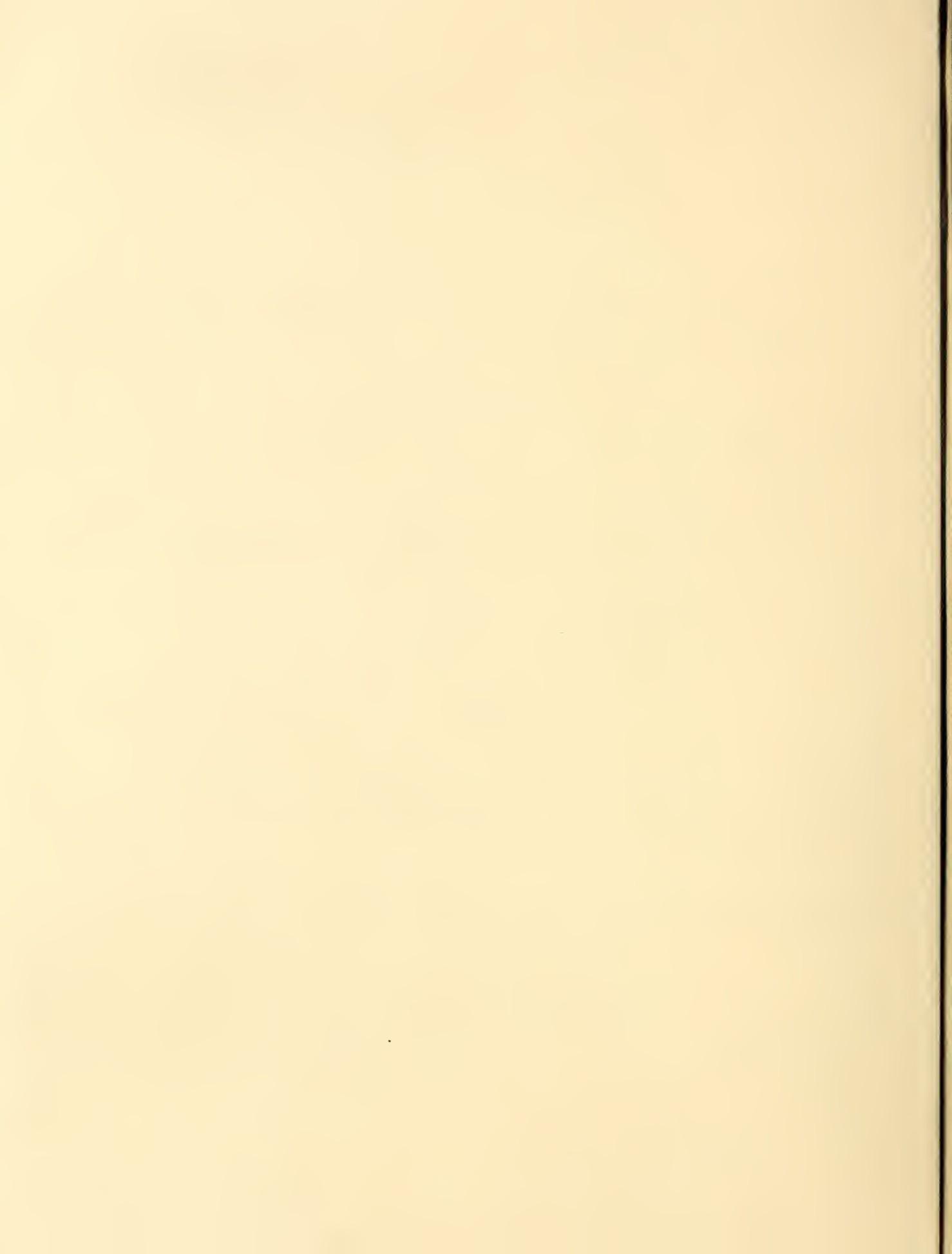


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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
Food Distribution Administration
Washington, D. C.

November 15, 1943

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Outline of a Plan for a "Clean Plate Club"

A. BACKGROUND

Early in 1942, the Minneapolis Star-Journal decided to give support to food conservation efforts of the local Red Cross Nutrition Committee by organizing a "Clean Plate Club". The newspaper claims no credit for originating the idea, but gives credit to Commander Ronald J. Chinnock, U. S. N. R., of Glencoe, Ill., who created the first "Clean Plate Club" in 1941. The American Red Cross, in its nutrition education program, has for several years used the slogan "Clean Your Plate and Starve the Garbage Can".

B. OBJECTIVES OF THE CLUB

The immediate objective of the club is that of persuading people to eat all the food on their plates. Since the studies to date indicate a serious loss of food through plate waste, the objective is of sufficient importance to warrant promotion of the idea on a major scale. Everyone eats, and the Clean Plate Club constitutes a means by which everyone can participate in the conservation program.

The over-all objective of the club is that of making us all waste conscious. In focusing attention on plate waste we attack directly only one phase of the problem of food waste, but since plate waste does concern us all it provides an opening wedge through which other phases of the problem may be attacked. For example, within the framework of either this campaign or a subsequent one, the housewife may be led to plan her meals more wisely, store and prepare the food more carefully, and make more skilful use of the left-overs. Once we're all sold on the importance of conserving food, follow-ups directed at retail waste, restaurant waste, farm waste, et cetera, become logical and acceptable.

C. PLAN OF ORGANIZATION

In order to make the whole community conscious of the need to save food, it is necessary to mobilize every channel of public information and organized activity.

It is, first of all, necessary to secure a sponsoring group which commands sufficient prestige and is willing to undertake the campaign. The Focal Nutrition Committee is normally an ideal sponsoring group,

but in some communities it may be more feasible to form a special committee of leading citizens, including representatives of the newspaper, retail, wholesale, restaurant, and women's club interests of the community.

D. SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING THE CAMPAIGN

Certain of the suggestions outlined here can be applied to a number of areas in which food waste occurs. Since the relative importance of these areas of waste will vary from community to community, the kind and the direction of the projects chosen for development will of course be discretionary with the sponsors of the campaign. The following are known to be important areas in which food waste occurs at the table: -

1. In the home
 - a. At breakfast
 - b. At lunch
 - c. At dinner
 - d. During the midnight snack
 - e. On casual occasions, between meals, etc.
2. In the public restaurant
3. In hotel restaurants
4. Boarding houses
5. Drug store lunch counter, etc.
6. Clubs
7. Factory restaurants
8. Schools
9. Church suppers, etc.
10. Institutions, such as hospitals, etc.
11. Community kitchens, missions, etc.
12. The lunch box

1. News stories announcing the formation of a "Clean Plate Club" together with the cooperating newspapers' own promotional advertisements could constitute the spearhead of the campaign. The launching of the campaign is good also for photographs and articles featuring community leaders signing pledges to save food.
2. Follow-up articles and pictures of other groups joining the club could well include children's organizations, war workers, home economists, college students, restaurant operators, et cetera.
3. Nearby Army camps and Navy stations undoubtedly would cooperate, while food conservation measures already in operation there would provide promotional material.
4. Feature articles on the quantity and content of the food garbage collected by the city at the beginning of the campaign, and at successive stages of the campaign, would provide an interesting gauge of the campaign's success.

Newspapers in those cities that now dump or burn their garbage might call attention to what other cities are doing to utilize garbage.

5. Feature articles on food waste and its relation to our home front food supply are suggested. These articles would be distinct from reports on the launching and progress of the "Clean Plate Club" drive as such.
6. Food conservation articles on the women's pages of the newspapers would sustain interest in the campaign. These could be signed by the chairman of the local nutrition committee or by the editors of the women's pages. A series could be built around such a theme as

"30 Ways to Save Food in Wartime"

And the series might be split along these lines:

- a. Meal Planning
- b. Selection at the Market
- c. Storage
- d. Preparation
- e. Service
- f. Table Manners
- g. Left-overs

If sufficient source material is not available in the community additional material may be secured through the Marketing Reports Division, Food Distribution Administration, Washington 25, D. C.

7. Recast of this material into folder form for consumer distribution is particularly urged.
8. One or more of the newspapers' staff cartoonists might develop some cartoons dramatizing the consequences of food waste, and the need for conservation.
9. A jingle or limerick contest built around the "Clean Plate" theme would be of interest to many readers.

10. Local radio stations can be of major assistance. Announcements of the launching of the campaign, interviews with community leaders in the campaign, news on the progress of the campaign, spots similar to those used in the War Bond promotion, all would be worth-while contributions.
11. A tie-in with programs featuring home economists would be extremely helpful.
12. There ought to be a profitable place for conservation ideas in the commercials of many of the radio advertisers.

13. Since the idea is known to have a special appeal to children, arrangements might be made to incorporate the idea into established programs directed to them.

14. Buttons, badges, certificates of membership are good devices for holding interest and are suggested for consideration.
15. The possibility of a radio contest for adult listeners is worth examination. The entry for such a contest might take the form of a letter on a theme similar to the following:

"How We are Saving Food in Our Home"

Personal appearances of the women who write the best letters, and the award of weekly prizes over the air, would maintain interest. Members of the local sponsoring committee, including well known home economists or nutritionists, might serve as judges.
16. A drive might be undertaken to enlist the continuing help of large space advertisers. Many advertisers use large enough space to permit the inclusion of a few lines on food conservation - a story that would not interfere materially with the sales message on their products or services. These advertisers might thus be willing to carry the "Clean Plate Club" pledge card, along with a punch line similar to the following:

"We're cooperating in America's food conservation program. Let's eat all the food we buy and order - then we'll have enough. Join the "Clean Plate Club"! Sign up now! It doesn't cost a cent - it may save a life on the fighting front!"
17. Many local business organizations, such as the utility companies, might be willing to enclose envelope stuffers on conservation along with the monthly statements they mail to their customers.
18. Department stores and other local business organizations might be persuaded to participate in the drive by setting up window displays on conservation.
19. Certainly the assistance of billboard advertisers is to be solicited.
20. A table tent pledge card directed to restaurant patrons might be prepared. One-half of the card to carry the story on food conservation; the other half to be a detachable postcard. One side of the postcard to carry the pledge copy:-

CLEAN PLATE CLUB

Name of Organization Handling Campaign
Care of Organization Handling Campaign or of a Cooperating
Newspaper

Please enroll us as members of the Clean Plate Club in the Government's Food Conservation Program. We pledge to do everything possible to avoid waste of food during the war. We agree to "clean our plates" at every meal.

(Names and Addresses)

The other side of the postcard to carry the address:-

CLEAN PLATE CLUB

Name of Organization Handling Campaign
Care of Organization Handling Campaign or of a Cooperating
Newspaper

21. A menu sticker would be effective - copy for such a sticker might read:-

ORDER WHAT YOU WANT -
BUT EAT ALL YOU ORDER

This is the way
- to Have Enough to Eat
- to Keep America Strong
- to Win the War Quicker!

Food Waste Helps the Axis

22. Posters are good. Restauranteurs or retail grocers might be willing to sponsor posters indicating their cooperation and urging their customers to join the "Clean Plate Club". Some suggestions for poster copy and design follow:

- a. Broken roll and smeared pat of butter on a bread and butter plate. Caption - "Half an ounce of butter saved each week by each of us would provide butter enough to supply 5,000,000 American fighting men."
- b. Dramatize the garbage can as a Fifth Columnist or a thief stealing food. Caption - "15% of America's food supply goes into the garbage pail."
- c. "Wartime Table Manners" Poster. Create a comic character at the table mopping up gravy with a piece of bread, or squeezing the last drops of juice from a grapefruit, or vigorously stirring up the sugar in a cup of coffee. Caption - "Food not eaten is wartime cheatin'."

- d. Picture of hungry American soldiers on field of action reaching toward mirage of food waste from American table. Caption - "America Wastes Enough Food Every Day to Feed 10,000,000 Fighting Men."
 - e. American boy throwing away half-eaten apple. Shadowy background filled in with figures of emaciated European children with reproachful eyes. Caption - "We might live on what you waste."
 - f. Picture of fat, bulging garbage can. Caption - "Food Waste - No. 1 Foe of the Housewife."
 - g. Picture of a soldier reaching over shoulder of surprised mother, about to stop her from peeling potatoes. Caption - "Spare the peel - Save the spud".
(With small display line at bottom
"When you peel and boil a potato you throw away 1/10 to 1/4 of its bulk, a large part of its vitamin C, and a large amount of its iron, which is concentrated close to the skin.")
 - h. Housewife in front of refrigerator, in an attitude of thought, with a bowl of food in her hands.-
Caption - "Think NOW how you will use the left-overs."
(Below) "Many refrigerators are just way stations to the garbage can."
 - i. Figures representing vitamins thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin climbing out of pot filled close to the top with water. Caption - "Ha Ha - She didn't know we could swim!"
(Footnote) "How to save the vitamins:- Steam your vegetables or cook with only a little water."
 - j. U. S. Soldier feeding hungry kids in Europe -
Caption - "Before you order think of them - Clean your plate - Starve the garbage can."
23. A house-to-house investigation of food waste might be carried out by a special committee of one of the prominent women's clubs and their findings given publicity.
24. A series of articles on wartime table manners might bring interesting results. The aim of such a series would be that of breaking down some of the peacetime table taboos that have been responsible for waste of significant amounts of our food supply.

Failure to eat all the soup, for fear of being thought greedy - failure to eat all the salad, the peas, the carrots, the greens, etc., because the last bits are usually elusive and

it is considered piggish to chase them - failure to eat all of a given portion of food because good manners forbid - these and many similar practices are due largely to a formalized code of manners that encourages, albeit without the intention as such, a waste of food now badly needed in both the war economy and the war strategy.

A new code is suggested - a code that encourages people to eat all their food. If proper sponsors were found, and would participate in the promotion they could help to launch a worthwhile conservation measure.

In many communities it obviously will not be possible to incorporate all these suggestions into the Clean Plate Club campaign. This list is set down merely to suggest some practical means of publicizing and promoting the idea - some of the suggestions may be used, other ideas will occur to the task force whose job it is to put over the campaign.

